

## A Grunt's Life 2

by Dinoman aka Blind-Eagle

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Summary: Grunty and his friends are back and just as cowardly. If you review, could you put a rating out of ten please? Thanks.

### 1. Earth

You may remember me, Grunty, from when I was on Installation 04. Well, this is basically the same thing, except it's in different places. It starts off when we go up a rank. Oh, and if you want to know how me and my friends got from Greeny's escape ship to High Charity, it's classified, so don't ask. And just before I start, I wanted you to know that all the mistakes in the first story are lies that Jackals told me at the Education Facility at recess time. One last thing before you begin reading. If you haven't read the first story, (or just don't remember it that well) READ IT NOW. This one won't make much sense otherwise.

Torbei, Rinyo and me sat on the floor of a room in High Charity as an Honour Guard Elite walked in holding a large metal box. He opened it up and removed from it two red Major Grunt armour pieces and a black SpecOps one.

'You two Grunts,' he said, pointing at Torbei and me, 'will be moved to Major rank, and wear this red armour. And you,' he pointed to Rinyo, 'will be put into SpecOps, wearing this black armour and permission to use a fuel rod cannon.'

'Yes!' Rinyo whispered.

The Elite dropped our specified armour in front of us and waited as we put it on. I heard muffled yells and cheers from out the open doorway, so I peeked out. A gold Elite was being stripped of his armour by Tartarus, the Brute Chieftain. The Elite's hands were put in restraints as Tartarus lifted a large stick with a burning end. Then it hit me. He was going to burn the Mark of Shame into the Elite's chest! Tartarus shoved the stick into the Elite's chest and he yelled in pain.

'What's going on out there?' asked Rinyo.

'Nothing of your concern,' said the Honour Guard. 'Now pay attention. The Prophet of Truth wishes for you to fight with the new Arbiterâ€'

'Whoa!' I said.

'By the Prophet's!' said Torbei.

'â€if!' added the Elite. 'You fight well onâ€|' the lights flickered and suspenseful music played for some reason, 'Earth!'

We gasped and there was a pause.

'What's that?' said Rinyo.

'It's the humans' home planet!'

'Ohâ€|Oh! Right. Oh noâ€|that is, um, surprising,' said Rinyo.

There was another pause.

'Aw crap, you ruined the whole effect,' said the Elite, his tone of voice like a small child's. 'Just go away. To the Phantom landing platform. Someone will take you to Earth.'

So we walked out the door and found our way to the landing platform, where a Phantom was ready for us to hop in. We each were pulled in and the Phantom took off.

'But how will we get there?' I said to an Elite on board. 'Earth is probably light years away.'

He made a huff sound and said, 'Some Phantoms have small slip space engines, you know.'

'They do?'

Suddenly the ship vibrated and I recognised the distinct feeling of slip space sickness. Yes, there is slip space sick just like seasick. A few minutes later the Phantom slowed and we jumped out. I felt hard ground under my feet. Our squad included an Elite, Torbei, Rinyo, me andâ€|

'Hey, who are you?' I asked a Minor Grunt.

He looked at me and said, 'Hi, my name's Latnem. I like stuff, do you like stuff?'

Oh no, I thought. I asked him, 'You didn't happen to know a Modnar, by any chance?'

'Oh yes, I know him. He's my cousin. He's still alive, in here.'

He clutched his head.

'Uh, isn't your heart in your chest?'

He covered his ears and yelled, 'La la la, not listening!'

He'll be dead by the end of the week, I thought.

I stepped away from him and noticed the Elite out from behind cover (we were hiding behind a human vehicle, I think it's called a 'bus'). That's when I noticed we were on a huge bridge.

'Wort wort wort!' I heard the Elite shout, then an ear-splitting explosion blew him into a purple splatter on the road.

Over the ringing in my ears, I heard a distinctly human-sounding engine becoming slowly louder and louder. The front of a vehicle came into view. The front of a

'Tank!' screamed Rinyo.

The rest of the tank drove out in the open and pointed its turret at us. I heard the gun power up, and it fired.

## 2. Regret

The tank's shot hit the bus, the blast sending us flying over the side of the bridge. Thud! We landed on the roof of a Phantom.

'Uh, have you ever thought about how lucky we are?' I said.

The Phantom began to fly in the direction of a large ship in the distance, dropping a Wraith tank on the way. We had to keep our balance, but after the short trip we were safely having a drink.

'Man, we deserve this drink,' said Torbei.

'Yeah,' I said, 'we sure do, after almost being blown to pieces by humans and getting a free ride on a Phantom by luck.'

'Yeah, but shut up, Grunty.'

After the drink everything shook and I felt slip space sickness again.

'Why are we slip spacing?' said Torbei.

'I'll tell you why,' said a deep voice from behind us. It was the Honour Guard Elite who gave us our new armour. 'We are slip spacing to get to' the lights flickered and suspenseful music played again, 'Delta Halo!'

We gasped and there was a pause.

'I'm sorry, um what is Delta Halo?' said Rinyo.

'It's another Sacred Ring!'

Another hesitation.

'Oh! Oh! Yeah. I, uh, did not see that coming at all,' said Rinyo.

'For the Prophet's sake!' yelled the Elite. 'You know nothing of the Sacred Rings and stuff! And you ruined the effect! Again!'

The Elite stormed out the door.

'What's his problem?' I wondered.

'Um, I think we're at "Delta Halo",' said Torbei. 'Wanna come to the grav-lift and take a look around?'

'Yeah. Let's take weapons,' I said. 'Just in case.'

The three of us grabbed needlers from the weapon containers and made our way to the grav-lift. Rinyo looked disappointed because there was no fuel rod cannon. As we floated down, I saw many mountains surrounding an enormous lake in the distance. In the centre there were two big Forerunner towers. At the bottom were trees, rocks and grass. Some birds circled in the sky. It was silent.

'Wellâ€¦this is really interesting,' said Rinyo.

Torbei and I looked at him.

'I needed to say something,' he said quickly. Then, after a while, 'Let's go back.'

The lift raised us back up to the ship. As we walked along a hallway we found Latnem. He said, 'They're sending troops to guard the Prophet of Regret. Get to the Phantom hangar and you might go there.'

Torbei and Rinyo rushed toward the hangar. I said to Latnem, 'Are you coming?'

'No. I prefer to do stuff. I like doing stuff, do you?'

He pointed at me. I ran after the others and we were pulled into a Phantom. There were already many Grunts and Honour Guards on board.

After a few minutes the Phantom dropped us off at one of the towers in the lake we saw earlier. Some Jackals with beam rifles stood next to Grunts on turrets. Our group hurried into the structure, where Regret was sitting in his floating chair at the back of a large hall. Two energy sword-wielding Elites guarded the entrance, while Grunts and Elites stood around the sides of the hall. Torbei, Rinyo and I stood in a corner.

'Well, this is boring,' said Rinyo.

'But look! The Prophet of Regret!' said Torbei excitedly.

'Boring,' repeated Rinyo, then spelt: 'B-O-R-R-E-E-N-G-G'

'That's not how you spell boring,' I said.

'Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot to pack a dictionary and spell-checker.'

'You three!' said a grumpy-looking Elite. 'Shut up.'

We stopped speaking. Then we heard muffled gunshots and explosions coming from outside. Human gunshots. An Elite appeared at the doorway, panting.

'What is it?' said Regret. 'Who is outside?'

The Elite began to speak, but the blade of an energy sword erupted from his chest and he dropped to the floor. A pool of purple blood surrounded his body. A large, green boot stepped in the blood. Greeny's boot.

'No,' I said. 'No! Not you again!'

Greeny looked at me. I could tell he was smiling, and he said, 'Me again.'

Then he slashed through the first wave of Covenant, and then threw the sword at an Elite. It hit him directly in the neck and Elite blood flowed down his chest as he fell onto the ground, the sword still embedded below his chin. Then Greeny pulled out a rocket gun. He shot at a group of Grunts, sending them flying, then fired rockets at Regret. The energy shields blocked his fire, so Greeny ran straight at the Prophet and leapt onto his chair. He punched him in the head repeatedly and quickly broke his face. I know that may sound funny, but it's not. His face was all bent and there was blood on it and his jaw was like, dislocated. Oh yeah, and the skin had like ripped across his face soâ€œoops. I was hoping to get through this story without being carried away.

So Greeny ran out the door, chucking a grenade behind him. After the explosion cleared an Elite ran over and knelt next to the Prophet's corpse.

'Nooooooooo!' he yelled dramatically. 'We will have revenge onâ€œew. His face is all mangled! Hey guys come over here and check this out!'

Numerous Grunts and Elites crowded around the corpse.

'Let's get going,' said Torbei.

A Phantom was waiting outside, where everything was scorched and almost completely obliterated. We hopped into it. The SpecOps Commander Elite was standing on the opposite side of the Phantom. Latnem was sitting on the floor reading a book called 'Stuff for Dummies'. The Commander strode up to us.

'Oh no,' whispered Rinyo. 'He's going to lecture us.'

'Greetings, young Grunts,' he said. 'I see you have worked hard in stopping the murder of the Prophet of Regret, but failed.'

'He put a little too much emphasis on "failed", don't you think?' Torbei whispered.

'Quiet, Grunt,' said the Commander. 'I do not blame you, for the Demonâ€œ'

'Greeny,' I said firmly.

'No, Demon.'

'Greeny.'

'No, Demon. I always win arguments. ALWAYS. The Demon is a powerful force, but cowering will not help. You must always stand and fight, orâ€|'

FIVE HOURS LATERâ€|

'And that's why some flowers are different colours to others.'

There was a silence.

'Uh, I think you kind of drifted off topic about three hours in,' said Rinyo.

'Yeah, and we learned that stuff in the education facility!' I said. 'With a teacher that actually knows how to say "chlorophyll!'

'You are banished!' Yelled the Commander, then shoved us out of the airborne Phantom.

### 3. The Arbiter

THUD. I landed on hard ground. I looked around and saw rocks, plants andâ€|the Control Tower in the distance! Torbei and Rinyo were standing next to me. Then I heard muffled voices and pulled them behind a pile of rocks.

'Look, Brutes,' I said.

'It's okay, Brutes are on our side, right?' said Torbei.

I listened in to the Brutes' conversation.

'I hate those stupid Elites, don't you? I mean, talk about weak.'

'I reckon,' said another. 'And their wimpy Grunt companions. We'll show them. We have Jackals. Stronger and faster than Grunts. Or should I say, Runts!'

The Brutes laughed.

Torbei, Rinyo and I ran through a nearby door. The Brutes voices continued outside. But then one of them whispered, 'Lower your voices! I smell Sangheili.'

Then I heard a slashing sound, and, 'That Elite just cut off my arms! You're in for it, pal!' SLASH. 'Aw, that's it. Just because I have no weapons doesn't mean I'm 'armlessâ€|Harmless! I said harmless.'

I then heard slashing and bodies falling for the next minute. Soon after, the door we just came through opened, revealingâ€|a floating energy sword. Then, in an instant, the Arbiter appeared, holding the sword.

'By the Prophets,' the three of us said at once.

The Arbiter's silver armour gleamed in the light, ancient Covenant script written all over it. I could see the Mark of Shame through a space in his armour.

'Can I get your autograph?' said Rinyo quickly, completely sabotaging the awesome moment.

Torbei and I shot mean looks at him, but the Arbiter pulled out a pen and signed a photo for Rinyo.

'Thankyou,' he said, wiping a tear from his eye and holding the photo to his chest.

'This way, young Grunts,' said the Arbiter.

We followed him through a door as he engaged his camo. We watched as he broke a Brute's neck and blew another apart with a grenade. All we had to do was follow the Brute and Jackal bodies, and we eventually found the Arbiter waiting near a door with some other Elites. We went through the door and ended up on a two-levelled room, with us on the top and Brutes accompanied by Jackals down the bottom. The Arbiter signalled for us to hold our position, then turned on his camouflage and snuck up to a Brute. He carefully drew out a plasma grenade, ignited it, and stuck it on the Brutes face. The Brute watched as the Arbiter turned the camo off and then was turned into a splatter on the floor. That's when the rest of us swarmed over the remaining Brutes and Jackals, killing them all in about a minute.

The Arbiter and his Elites left the room, but as Torbei, Rinyo and me left, I heard whimpering behind me.

'Latnem?' I said.

'Who's there?' he said, covering his head.

'It's me, Grunty. Remember?'

He moved his hand and stood up. 'Oh. Hi. The Brutes were everywhere! They took me hostage, but then they let me go.'

'Hmm. I wonder why?' I said to Torbei and Rinyo, and they sniggered. 'Come on, or we'll lose the rest of the group.'

I felt stupid saving Latnem. He was weird and annoying, and most people don't like him. Most people don't like anyone in his family. But we're told not to leave anyone behind. I just hope we don't get his cousin or brother or something again if we get a new team member.

Me and Latnem followed bodies and ended up at a door, where I found a fuel rod cannon. I stared at it for a while, a grin spreading across my face, then picked it up. It was really heavy, but I managed. Latnem said, 'Cool! You could do so much stuff with that thing. I really like stuff, do you like stuff? Stuff is so cool. When I get home I'm so gonna doâ€"'

I whacked him in the head with the cannon and knocked him out cold.

'Yeah,' I said coolly. 'Lots of stuff.'

Then I went through the door and found myself outside, looking over a huge cliff. There was a beach a long way down that led to the Control Tower. Down a hill to my left, the rest of the group battled a pack of Brutes. One was in a Ghost, so I ran down to help them. Once the fight was over, I tapped Rinyo on the shoulder. He turned around and jumped backwards at the sight of a cannon's barrel pointed at his face.

'You're not allowed to use that!' he yelled. 'Give it here.'

'I wanna use it though.'

'No! Now give it to me.'

He snatched the cannon and traded me his plasma pistol. I walked along and then saw something better than the cannon. A Ghost!

'If only I could drive one of these,' I said.

I imagined myself driving a Ghost with a cool paint job, neon lights underneath, a body kit and a modified engine.

'You can,' said a voice.

The thought popped out of my head.

'What?'

'You can drive the Ghost if you want to.' It was a Zealot (Most people just call them 'Gold Elites'). 'They changed the law. Now it's "Any Unggoy may pilot a Ghost or ride the side seat of a Spectre unless authorities inform otherwise".'

But I was already boosting across the canyon, running down enemies and firing the plasma cannons like a maniac. I also laughed crazily. Rinyo was staring at me blankly, and then he said, 'Are you okay?'

'I'mâ€|soâ€|happy!' I yelled, not letting my thumbs leave the fire button.

'I'll take that as a no.'

I gunned the engine and began to boost along a path, but noticed a Spectre. An enemy Spectre. I tried to swerve out of the way but plasma hammered into the Ghost's bonnet, sending metal flying everywhere. I couldn't fire because the Ghost's cannons were broken, then felt plasma burn the side of my body. The last thing I saw was the Ghost snap in two before everything went black.

#### 4. Uprising

I blinked my eyes open. It was blurry but things came into focus. I was lying in the dirt, and I could see a destroyed Spectre and mutilated Brute bodies.

'You okay?' said Rinyo as I sat up.

'Yeah, I think so,' I said, wiping dust off my armour. 'Where's the Ghost?'

He pointed at a mangled chunk of purple metal with smoke pouring out of where the engine might have been. I followed Rinyo down a path. Up ahead, the canyon sloped down and turned right. We caught up to the rest of the group but kept behind them because they were firing at a Brute encampment. Most of them were taken out by explosive containers, and stragglers were easily dealt with by beam rifle shots. At the end of the stream was a small waterfall with two Jackal snipers waiting for us. We killed them and jumped down the waterfall into a small lake, about waist height (For Grunts, by the way). The Elites killed the first wave of Brutes and I stopped to look at one of their weapons. It was human, and it was long and black. The humans call it a shotgun I think, and I'd seen them do a lot of damage with it. So I picked it up. It was heavy, but not as heavy as the fuel rod cannon. Then I caught up with the group and ran ahead of them. As a door opened, two Brutes came through. I screamed and ran away, and the Arbiter killed one, but his weapon overheated and the other Brute punched him in the jaw, knocking him to the floor. That's when my quick thinking kicked in. I charged at the Brute, jumped on his head and pulled his eyes out. Then I fired the shotgun into his mouth and his brains splattered all over the ground. I stood on the headless Brute's chest and said, 'You call that a challenge?'

Everyone cheered and chanted, 'Grunty, Grunty, Grunty!'

'Grunty! Grunty, wake up! Grunty!' It was Torbei.

I looked around. The Brute was lying on the ground, but he still had his head, and the Arbiter didn't have a black eye.

'Wha--? What happened?' I said. Then I realised I had imagined everything again. 'Oh, waitâ€|Aw no, it happened again!'

'Heh, just like with the rocket launcher that time,' said Torbei.

'Shut up,' I said.

I stood up and we followed the Arbiter through a Brute weapons depot. Inside were Covenant and human weapons, I assume kept by the Brutes as trophies. There were beam rifles, Brute shots, Brute plasma rifles, carbines and two human guns. The first one I recognised immediately. It was a rocket gun like the one that almost killed me on the first Halo. The second one I think is called a shotgun. I decided to take a Brute plasma rifle. The Arbiter took the rocket gun and some ammo and we continued through a door that led outside. We killed all the Brutes and Jackals, and the Arbiter easily destroyed a waiting Wraith with the rocket gun. Some enemies came through a tunnel nearby, including a Brute on a Ghost. Rinyo obliterated the Ghost with his fuel rod cannon, also killing the surrounding Jackals and most of the Brutes. The Arbiter slashed the remaining Brutes with his sword and ran into the tunnel. As he disappeared around a corner, I said to myself, 'I wish I was back at High Charity.'

I looked up at the sky. High Charity was orbiting Halo! But I could faintly see fire around it. I also saw something else. I saw a green

haze surrounding the city, which could only mean one thing.  
Flood.

After a short while, a Phantom picked us up, leaving the Arbiter on his own.

Inside there were worried-looking Elites.

'Quiet, everyone,' said one. 'High Charity has been overrun by the Flood.' The squad gasped. 'We are low on reinforcements, and we are asking you to fight the parasite with us.'

'How 'bout no!' said an Elite, and threw himself out of the Phantom.

There was a long pause.

'Uhâ€¦youâ€¦you see that, young Grunts?' said the first Elite to us. 'That guy was just showing youâ€¦what not to do.'

He turned away, muttering something like, 'Sacrilegious coward,' then continued speaking to the squad. 'To make a bad thing worse, the Demon is alsoâ€¦'

'Who?' I said.

'The Demon. The Demon isâ€¦'

'It's Greeny. Not Demon.'

'No, it's Demon.'

'Greeny.'

'Demon!'

'Greeny!'

'Hey, hey!' yelled the Zealot. 'Stop arguing! Anyway, he's called the Master Chief.'

The Elite and I stared at him blankly.

'What the hell is a Master Chief?' I said.

'JUST SHUT UP EVERYBODY!' screamed Rinyo.

No one spoke for the rest of the trip.

## 5. Sruutamee

We touched down on one of High Charity's Phantom landing platform and jumped out of our dropship. The scene in front of us was horrifying. Flood were surrounding a crashed human drop ship. A few Grunts came through a door and were immediately attacked by Flood Infection Forms. An Elite surveyed the situation as he began to speak. 'We must stop the Demâ€¦', he glanced at me, 'um, "Greeny" from boarding the Forerunner ship.'

I looked across to the centre of High Charity, where the enormous ship sat under an opening in the ceiling. Around the ship, the huge city lay like a "POP! Green fluid splattered across my head. I turned to see the Zealot, who had just popped an Infection Form that had jumped at me. I thanked him and wiped the green liquid off my face.

After killing the rest of the Flood in the area, our group went through the door that the Grunt came out of before. We followed dead bodies to find Greeny. The stench was awful, even though I wore my mask. The thought of my mask made me remember when I was a kid, not wearing a mask or armour, playing in the methane atmosphere. I miss home. I didn't even want to be in the armour. I'm supposed to work. Do jobs for Elites and stuff.

Anyway, where was I?

Big blobs of infecty stuff (Note: Infecty is not a word) were stuck on the walls and floor, and faint green spores filled the air. As we walked through an intersection of some hallways, something leapt across and knocked the Zealot into another hallway. We ran to help, thinking it was the Flood, but it was actually a scared Elite. He was covered in cuts and bruises, his armour had cracks and holes and one of his jaws was missing.

'What are you doing?' snarled the Zealot.

'Quiet!' whispered the stranger. 'You must not alert the parasite. We have to leave High Charity. I lost my weapon long ago and I couldn't get out of that hallway in fear of the Flood noticing me. They are far stronger and more agile than Elites; I knew I didn't stand a chance out there. But now you are here. Your team is healthy and armed. Please, I beg of you, will you take me to a Phantom?'

The Zealot hesitated, and then said, 'We must stop the Demon from boarding the Forerunner ship. We have no time for you. We don't even know your name.'

'My name is Sruutamee. Even with weapons, you probably won't ever exit that hallway if you continue. I know. There were five other members of my squad, but now they are gone.'

A horrible roar echoed through the halls, followed by silence for what seemed like hours.

'Alright, we will take a Phantom and you will come with us,' said the Zealot. 'But, Sruutamee, you owe us a lot.'

Part happiness, part amazement, part shock. He said, 'Thankyou. Thankyou so very much. I am forever in debt.'

We quietly walked back down the hall to the Phantom landing platform. There was one battered Phantom, but it had to do. The Zealot jumped into the pilot seat and Torbei, Rinyo and I sat down the centre of the ship, in the Grunt seating area. Sruut leaned against a wall, looking very tired. I'm calling him Sruut instead of Sruutamee because I can't be screwed typing Sruutamee. I soon fell asleep for a while. I woke up about an hour later. We still weren't at Halo, I guess because the Phantom's engines were damaged. Sruut was pacing up and down the ship and Torbei and Rinyo were still asleep.

Suddenly the Phantom shook and grew hot inside. Torbei and Rinyo woke up and Torbei said, 'What was that?'

'Don't be afraid,' said the Zealot, 'we are just passing through Halo's atmosphere.'

We all sighed in relief, then I fell asleep again after a few minutes. I was woken up by the ship shaking violently again.

'There's two atmospheres?' I said to the Zealot.

'No,' he replied grimly, 'that was a Wraith shot.'

My heart skipped a beat. Another explosion made the Phantom shudder. Then another. Plasma gas began leaking from the wall. Then a huge white-blue flash ripped the wall open, and I watched chunks of metal fly out the hole. Wind blew around the inside of the Phantom. Outside, about half a kilometre below us on a beach, two Wraiths fired at us. Looming over the Wraiths was an immense, bug-like tank. A Scarab. One damaged Banshee fired at the Wraiths, destroyed one and flew across to the Control Tower!

'That's the Arbiter!' I yelled.

'Where's the Arbiter?' said Torbei, getting as close as he could to the gaping hole in the wall.

None of us were aware of the flaming blue plasma mortar heading for us. It scored a direct hit into the main propulsion fan of our ship. The Phantom dropped. It just dropped out of the sky. It rattled, smoke shoot out the bottom. Torbei, Rinyo and I huddled together. Sruut grabbed the wall opposite to the hole. The Zealot did the same. Rinyo whispered, 'This is it.'

End  
file.